

FEDERATION

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At the Latin American Leaders' Training Conference

WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION

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STAFF NEWS

Following the Latin American Leaders' Training Conference *Valdo Galland* returned to Colonia Valdense in Uruguay to work on the report and follow-up of that meeting. He is also preparing a report on S.C.M. work in Latin America for presentation to the General Committee, and is making plans for his trip to India via Geneva.

Kyaw Than has visited the site of the General Committee in Poona, and has met C. S. Paul, Chandran Devanesan and M. M. Thomas in Madras to tell them about his trip to Europe, to give them details of the Executive Committee meeting which he attended, and to make plans for the Federation conference and General Committee. He is now visiting the Philippines, also in preparation for the General Committee.

Harry Daniel has been travelling and "conferencing" almost without interruption in recent weeks. Following a brief trip to Prague, Czechoslovakia, on an assignment for World University Service, he went to England where he presented the needs of the West African S.C.M. to a meeting of leaders of the missionary societies. A brief visit to his former home in Newcastle, and then he left for the International Missionary Council meeting at Willingen, and for the student meeting which followed it. He attended the W.U.S. Assembly in Grenoble, France, and returned for a few hectic days in the office during which he made final plans for the Federation conference at Agape, of which he was in charge. From Italy he went directly to the W.S.C.F. Theological Students' Conference held in Lund, Sweden, in connection with the meeting of the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches.

Keith Bridston attended the Annual Conference of the Scottish S.C.M. and then the I.M.C. meeting in Willingen. Following this he went to Hannover for the Lutheran World Assembly, and then back to Geneva for a few days before leaving for the Theological Students' Conference at Lund.

Marie-Jeanne de Haller's travels are recorded in some detail in her "Conference Diary" (p. 91). She is now back in Geneva catching up on office work and preparing for the Federation meetings in India this winter.

Philippe Maury returned from the Latin American Leaders' Training Conference in Brazil to spend some busy days in the office and to attend a meeting of the World Christian Youth Commission. He is now in the United States where he will remain until the end of September, taking part in the Ashram of the Lutheran Student Association, a conference of Disciples students, the annual meeting of the student Y.M. and Y.W.C.A.s, and the U.S.C.C. Assembly, where he will also meet with the American Officers in preparation for the General Committee. Before flying back for the British S.C.M. General Council he will spend two days in Canada.



Marie-Jeanne de Haller and students at Agape

CONFERENCE DIARY

MARIE-JEANNE DE HALLER

I left Geneva for Holland early in July on the first leg of a journey which was to take me to conferences there, in England and in Germany. Leersum, the traditional camping place of the V.C.S.B., one of the Dutch S.C.M.s, seemed to someone from Switzerland, with vivid memories of soaked camp grounds and wet feet, to be an ideal place for living under tents, as the sandy soil absorbed the rain almost immediately. The tents which sheltered the students, who came from all the university towns of Holland, were grouped under the tall trees around one large tent which served as a meeting place.

The spirit of the camp was wonderful. In accordance with V.C.S.B. tradition it was completely student run; even the cooking was done by the students in an open air kitchen. In spite of the strangeness of the language I felt myself immediately at home when I arrived, just in time to hear an extremely well presented Bible study and then to participate in one of the small discussion groups which met in the tents. This group study took place in the mornings after a happy breakfast in Dutch style with all kinds of strange things to spread on your bread. The afternoons were partly free and partly devoted to speeches and discussions on the meaning of vocation. Most of the problems which have been debated in the Federation University Commission were touched upon, and I felt that the students were really helped by talking with one another about their future careers and their place in society. The worship was extremely informal, as is customary in the V.C.S.B., but I felt that it was meaningful for many of the campers. It seems to me that such a camp can be a wonderful meeting place for students from different church and ideological backgrounds, and I was impressed by the freedom with which issues were debated and the spirit of common search for the truth.

I wish I had been able to understand more than the intellectual Dutch and so could have shared in all the wonderful jokes which caused such hilarity at mealtimes, and joined in the rousing songs. One evening we had a beautiful campfire, the most artistically constructed I have ever seen, and the folk dancing brought to mind old Dutch paintings and made me regret the absence of the traditional Dutch costumes. I was excited to see, however, that some of the students did wear wooden shoes.

I was most grateful for the opportunity to take part in this conference, and wish all the best to the student leaders who are doing such a fine job with no full-time person to help them.

Study Swanwick

After six or eight years of recommending to students that they go to Swanwick, which is the heart of the British S.C.M., it was really quite an historic event for me to go there for the first time myself. I had heard such glowing reports on both the place itself and the conferences held there that I was prepared for a let-down, but this was not at all the case. Although unfortunately the weather was really cold and rainy, the big grey-stone house set among beautiful green lawns and trees was very comfortable, and there

were always groups and individuals sitting here and there reading the books they had been assigned to study or discussing their contents.

For Study Swanwick is a real study conference. On the first afternoon each delegate brought to the librarian the six books he had agreed to provide for the benefit of the community, and through this remarkably efficient system the conference had at its disposal an excellent library and at no expense. In the mornings we studied the Epistle to the Romans. With the help of the very carefully prepared study outline, we wrestled with the now unfamiliar words of justification, ransom, etc., and were all made aware of the importance of justification by faith and what it means for our lives. At the early morning worship services the conference chaplain introduced a period of silent meditation, and evening prayers closed the day.

Some challenging lectures were delivered in the afternoons on such topics as the relevance of the Bible for the modern world, the meaning of repentance and renewal in the realms of personal, political, economic and cultural life, and the responsibility of Christians in such fields. There were also films describing the life of the Church in different parts of the world, and sessions with leaders of missionary societies and an expert on industrial evangelism.

But the heart of the conference was the seminars. There were thirteen such groups varying in size from six to thirty, each concentrating on one subject: Salvation; The Poetic Use of Language; The Christian Discipline of the Intellect; The Social Sciences; The Christian Doctrine of Creation; British Imperialism; East and Central Africa; The Church; Sex, Marriage and the Single Life; The Church in the Local Situation; The Law and the Christian Lawyer, and Britain and the U.S.A. Each member was expected to do some serious reading on a specific subject and then to cooperate with others in throwing light on the problem. This process made us aware of how difficult it is to read intelligently — to analyse and criticize rather than merely to absorb. This became particularly clear when we tried to explain to others what the books we had read were really saying, and when together we endeavoured to relate them to the problems we face today as Christians in our university world. In our seminar theologians and scientists made moving efforts to define from their respective disciplines and philosophies of life what justification by faith can mean. This experience at Swanwick has made me wish that more S.C.M.s would undertake this type of conference, because it seems to me that today students are prepared to make sacrifices to come to a working conference where they do some real study and put their faith to a genuine test.

The delegates relaxed from this serious reading and Bible study, and intense discussions on problems of European unity and evangelism in an industrial society, in wonderful volley ball, cricket and tennis matches. A tradition at Swanwick is the famous obstacle race in which all members of the conference participate and which ends with the distribution of prizes by two delegates dressed as "Lord and Lady Swanwick". On the last evening there were also some amusing skits caricaturing features of the conference.

This happy combination of study, worship and recreation helped to develop a real feeling of Christian community among the more than two hundred delegates, and the foreign students in particular were most happy in what they had feared would be a very difficult conference for them.



Everybody up ! — Calling the campers at the V.C.S.B. conference

Lutheran World Assembly

A small group of us went from Swanwick to Hannover, Germany, in order to attend the Lutheran World Assembly. After great difficulty in getting passage across the channel because of the continent-bound holiday crowds, and one night spent standing in the aisle of a packed train, we arrived just in time for the wonderful opening service of the Assembly, led by Bishop Lilje, who reminded us that the true spirit of the Reformation was one of repentance and renewal. I was also privileged to hear two remarkable addresses by Bishops Nygren of Sweden and Berggrav of Norway, and to take part in the Commission on Youth and Student Work.

Parallel to the Assembly itself, two or three thousand young people met for a Youth and Student Convention, and it was a great pleasure to meet on every street corner and in the big *Stadthalle* members of S.C.M.s who took a very active part in the meeting. Although it was a Lutheran convention, the ecumenical preoccupation was very much felt, and Bishop Lilje one evening reminded the students of their responsibility to the world Church and spoke of his own experiences as a former Secretary of the German S.C.M. Ruth Wick, Vice-Chairman of the Federation and newly-appointed Executive Secretary of U.S.C.C., played an important role in both the Youth Convention and the Youth Commission of the Assembly.

In addition to the official members of the Assembly and delegates to the Youth Convention, thousands of Lutherans from all over Western Germany crowded into the city for special meetings in the stadium and tents, where some of the leaders of the Assembly addressed them. Huge processions, with brass bands and stirring hymn singing, made the whole city aware of this great gathering of Lutherans from around the world.

I had to leave before the closing service in order to have a couple of days in Geneva in preparation for the last stop on my conference tour for this summer — the Federation Annual Conference at Agape, Italy.

AGAPE

It was very appropriate that the Federation Annual Conference should be held this year at Agape, where ever since the war young people from all over the world have come together in work camps to build this centre as a symbol of the love which Christians should have for one another and for all their fellow men. During our meeting we had the privilege of sharing in their fellowship when some of the work campers came during the evenings to sing with us. This was also the first time we had held a W.S.C.F. conference in Italy with the Italian S.C.M. as the host Movement, and many of the delegates were particularly interested by the excursion we took to the centre of the Waldensian Church. There we visited the grotto where in the thirteenth century, in their efforts to escape persecution, the Waldensians held their services, reading the Bible, praying and singing hymns. This trip was a welcome relaxation from the otherwise very heavy conference schedule.

We came from twenty-five countries and many different backgrounds, but as we studied, worshipped and played together we learned once again, as a Greek student put it, that "under the shadow of the Cross understanding is possible in spite of differences of mentality, of language and of nationality". The Bible studies on the First Epistle of Peter will long remain in the memories of the delegates, thanks to the brilliant leadership of D. T. Niles from Ceylon. In the course of the discussions he challenged us to discover what distinguishes a true Christian from, for example, a devout Hindu, and made us see that the crucial difference lies in the fact that a Christian feels impelled to evangelize, while the Hindu, although he may himself accept Jesus Christ as divine, has no desire to tell others about Him. How many of us are still Hindus in this respect? As conference chaplain "D. T." also lead the worship services, which, as one Dutch student has written, "brought us face to face once again with a very difficult problem: how to pray to our Lord. I think the answer to a small part of that problem became clear to me and for that I went home full of thankfulness. I learned that it does not make any sense to have long talks about how to pray or not to pray, but that the main thing is to try sincerely again and again to do it."

This student had never before been at a Federation conference and was also deeply impressed by "the consciousness of friendship, real brotherhood with all Christian students in the world". He mentions particularly how moved he was by the exchange of telegrams between the Agape conference and that of the Studentengemeinde which was meeting at the same time in Berlin and which was also studying I Peter. To them we sent the following message: "And the God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall himself perfect, establish, strengthen you" (I Peter 5 : 10). And we received in reply: "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,

Bible and other study groups, conferences at Christmas and Easter, and the publication of a news sheet. They have recently taken steps towards closer relationship with the S.C.M. in Indonesia, and with the other Student Christian Movements in the Netherlands.

Canada

The Federation staff was very happy to receive greetings from the delegates to the National Council of the Canadian S.C.M. and would like to share with you extracts from the letter describing this important meeting:

You can well imagine that this was a particularly Federation-conscious Council since we agreed to invite Gerd Arnborg (of Norway) to join our staff and rejoiced over the news that Valdo Gálland is to visit us next year. Helen Burlton talked of the history and life of the Federation and Bill Fennell shared with us his first-hand experiences of participation in a Federation consultation. Andrew Yoggy, fraternal delegate from U.S.C.C. also made his contribution.

The Council was a good one... We started off with four days of study on "The Human Predicament: Its Causes and Cure", with addresses by a social scientist, a natural scientist, a humanist and a Christian. The purpose was, of course, to confront students with the various philosophies which are live options in the university today and to enable them to appraise them from a Christian point of view. Despite the criticism that the discussions were "too philosophical and too abstract", it is significant that Council agreed that the subject of our regional Christmas conferences should be "The Crisis in the University" and that discussions similar to those at the Council should be continued there. I think that speaks for itself.

When we got down to the business sessions, things "came alive" in a wonderful way. Our first discussion was about work camps, the main issue being whether industry was somehow basic to the entire social situation and whether, therefore, industrial work camps should be basic to our whole work camp program. It was the general feeling that

industry was "somehow basic" and we agreed that we should continue to major in the field of industry camps, though not to the exclusion of new experiments in other areas such as mining, agricultural conservation, etc.

The students debated for a long time the matter of our relationship to the World Assembly of Youth. This is for us a complicated matter, since Canada is in the throes of trying to produce a representative youth coordinating committee which could be related to W.A.Y. On the one hand we have the French-Canadian groups anxious to proceed and presenting us with a better avenue of cooperation than previously, and on the other, if we throw our lot in with that group, the present coordinating committee which contains communist but no French-Canadian groups, will go out of existence. We finally decided to send observers only to the meeting to consider setting up a Canadian W.A.Y. Committee. A recommendation was passed urging local units to take more seriously, at the local level, the matter of their witness among leftist groups...

The Council appointed the Rev. Robert Miller as Associate Secretary with special responsibility for study... We think he has a tremendous contribution to make to our Movement, particularly because of his concern to find new ways for the Church to witness among lay folk, and he has already endeared himself to us all.

South-East Asia

Our congratulations to the S.C.M.s of Burma, Indonesia, Malaya, the Philippines and Thailand who at the South-East Asian Leaders' Training Course decided to publish a "South-East Asian S.C.M. News Letter" so they can maintain closer contact with one another. Each of the Movements will edit the News Letter in turn. The first number, edited in Malaya, contains a full account of the S.E.A.L.T.C., a description of the host Movement in Indonesia and a letter from Tine Franz, its General Secretary, telling what happened after the conference was over, and news items from the various Movements.

INTERCESSIONS

Thanksgiving

Let us give thanks to God for the manifold blessings he has bestowed upon us: Almighty and everlasting God, who hast created us of thy love which was before the foundation of the world, we give thee thanks for all thy goodness to us. Especially do we praise thee for thy grace which we have seen at work in the life of our Federation. We have found a strength not our own to sustain us in the days of trouble and new power to glorify thee in our common task. We thank thee for the gathering together of Christian students from many lands in various places during the past months. We thank thee that so many were able to be at the Latin American Leaders' Training Conference and for thy great love shown towards them in their life together. Above all do we offer thee our thanksgiving for the continued life of our Lord Jesus Christ among us. Grant that He may so strengthen us that we may in all things glorify thee through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Confession

Let us humbly confess our common sins unto God, our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness. Let us confess: how often we have failed to seize the situations in which God has placed us to use them for His glory; our too great concern for ourselves and our too little love for others; our taking ourselves too seriously and forgetting that all things are in the hands of God, our Father; our failure to see the eternal significance of the details of our daily life; our persistent pride that corrupts our every endeavour; our repeated forgetfulness of the presence of Christ among us.

May the almighty and merciful Lord grant unto us pardon and remission of all our sins, time for amendment of life, and the grace and comfort of his Holy Spirit. Amen.

Intercession

Let us pray God for all men everywhere and especially for those whom God has given us to pray for:

- for all delegates to the Federation conferences this summer, that God may grant them the wisdom to use their experience to the glory of Christ and to the further spread of His Gospel among their fellow students;
- for those Christian students who could not attend conferences, that they may be sustained by the knowledge of the worship and witness made there;
- for the Student Christian Movements in Latin America that they may find a new strength from their recent conference to proclaim the Kingdom of God in their universities and schools and among all their countrymen;
- for those in the southern hemisphere who are now planning their summer conferences, that they may know the will of God for them and have the wisdom and strength to perform the same;
- for the delegates to the Travancore Conference and the General Committee, that they may find Christ at all times present among them as Lord and Saviour, and follow Him at all costs;
- for all students who know not the love of Christ, that we may be used as God's instruments to proclaim Him to them with our lips and in our lives;
- for all our teachers and professors, that they may not in teaching the truths of human wisdom forget Him who is the Truth;
- for the whole Church of Christ, that the Federation and we, its members, may be an earnest of that day when there shall be one Church visible as there is now one Church Triumphant.

O God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, we humbly beseech thee for all sorts and conditions of men; that thou wouldst be pleased to make thy ways known unto them, and to grant them life everlasting; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.